

MASTITIS & COMPRESSED DUCTS

Created by Brittney Pederson, BA, IBCLC

"Mastitis" involves an inflammatory response in breast tissue and has a spectrum of symptoms.

By taking an anti-inflammatory approach, we can relieve or resolve symptoms.

If an issue is left unresolved, it can lead to complications farther along on the mastitis spectrum.

An evaluation by a medical professional should be sought if your symptoms are not improving within 24-48 hours or you begin experiencing symptoms that are not localized to the breast such as fever, chills or a high heart rate (over 100 beats per minute).

LATCHING/PUMPING

Do not focus on "emptying" the breast if you are experiencing symptoms of mastitis. **Milk expressed during an active case of mastitis is safe for your baby to drink.**

Trying to latch more than your baby needs or over-pumping can lead to prolonged symptoms. Likewise, avoiding nursing or pumping can create issues. We want to keep fluid moving and avoid over-stimulation.

If you are concerned your baby is not latching effectively, gentle hand expression or gentle manual pumping is ok.

WHAT IS THE ROOT CAUSE?

Episodes on the mastitis spectrum could be due to a number of factors. Visiting with an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) as part of a healthcare team can help you to identify your most likely causes and avoid future cases of mastitis.

THE BASICS



Try lymphatic drainage with light sweeping of the skin



Use ice or cold to decrease inflammation



NSAID's approved by your care provider, ex: ibuprofen



Sunflower or Soy Lecithin may help (5-10g daily)

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Avoid deep massage of the lactating breast
- Avoid heat unless right before milk stimulation
- Avoid saline soaks and topical oils

LYMPHATIC DRAINAGE

Here are illustrations of some lymphatic drainage techniques, by Kelly J Rosso, MD, MS, FACS. One of the most important factors is to **keep a light touch**. The level of pressure should be comparable to petting a cat or washing a wine glass. Do 10 small circles at the clavicle and 10 small circles in the axilla. Then you can start gentle sweeping motions away from the nipple towards those areas.



SOURCE: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Clinical Protocol #36: The Mastitis Spectrum, Revised 2022

"These protocols serve only as guidelines for the care of breastfeeding [parents] and infants and do not delineate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as standards of medical care. Variations in treatment may be appropriate according to the needs of an individual patient."